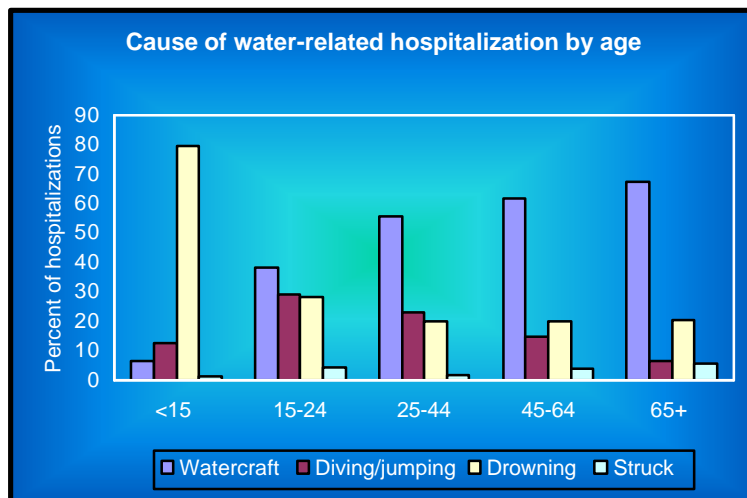


Be Safe In and On the Water This Summer! Avoid Water-Related Injuries

- Between 1990 and 2000, nearly 600 people died of water-related injuries in New Jersey between the months of May and September. The death rate decreased about one-third during the 1990s.
- The majority of water-related injury deaths are drownings, but about ten percent are injuries involving watercraft or diving or jumping into water. 97% of deaths to blacks are drownings compared to 83% of deaths to whites.
- More than 80% of water-related injury deaths occur to males. The death rate for blacks is 1.8 times higher than the rate for whites. The death rate is highest among those aged 15-24.
- Between 1994 and 2001, there were over 1,600 hospitalizations for water-related injuries in the summer in New Jersey, although the numbers decreased nearly 50% over the 8-year period, mostly due to a decrease in hospitalizations for watercraft accidents. These figures do not include emergency room visits.



- Unlike deaths, most hospitalizations are for watercraft accidents (41%), followed by near-drownings (38%), diving or jumping accidents (18%), and being struck by an object in the water (3%).
- Nearly 70% of those hospitalized are male. The hospitalization rate is highest among whites and those under age 25.
- 47% of hospitalizations among whites are for watercraft accidents, 31% for near-drownings, and 19% for jumping and diving accidents. Among blacks, 69% of hospitalizations are for near-drownings, 16% for watercraft accidents, and 13% for jumping or diving.
- The best prevention against drowning is to learn how to swim. Enroll adults and children over age 3 in swimming classes.
- Never swim alone or in unsupervised areas. Teach children to always swim with a buddy.
- If you own a pool, completely enclose it with a fence with self-closing and self-latching gates, have a telephone nearby to call 911 if necessary, and learn CPR.
- Check water depth before entering. A minimum depth of 9 feet is recommended for diving or jumping.
- Stop swimming if you are tired, cold, far from safety, have had too much sun, have overexerted yourself, or had alcohol.
- In open water, know the day's weather forecast, swim only in designated areas, be cautious even when lifeguards are present, watch for dangerous waves and rip currents, and always use Coast Guard-approved life jackets when boating.

For more data from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services: www.state.nj.us/health/chs

Drowning prevention tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/drown.htm

Water safety tips from the American Red Cross: www.redcross.org/services/hss/tips/healthtips/safetywater.html

United States Lifesaving Association web site: www.usla.org

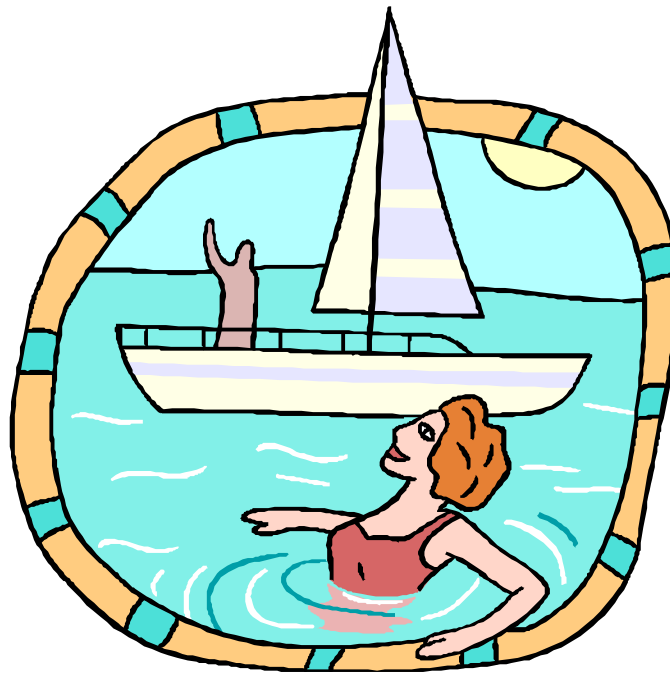
Sources:

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics:
New Jersey 1994-2001 Uniform Billing hospitalization file, unpublished data

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics:
New Jersey 1990-2000 Multiple Cause of Death Files, unpublished data

Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control:
[Drowning Prevention](#)

American Red Cross, Health and Safety Tips:
[Water Safety Tips](#)



James E. McGreevey, Governor
Clifton R. Lacy, MD, Commissioner

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
Center for Health Statistics
P.O. Box 360
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360